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The Components of Consciousness - Mental and Phenomenological Processes

Subjective Perception

How are various experiences in life perceived mentally? What does that mean anyway - to perceive something mentally. I wrote in a previous article that life can be viewed or perceived cognitively and emotionally. If life can be perceived in different ways then it can give rise to different experiences. Different emotional and intellectual experiences.

Different 'things' in life can be phrased in different ways. How can the experiences or phenomena in life be divided? People usually simply use the term 'thing' but phenomena could be experiences or occurrences. How does that relate to verbal phrasing, however? If someone uses a different word then it could mean something completely different than using another word or phrasing something differently. You would need to look closely at the definition of the word and see what it does for someone psychologically - and assume that it would have a similar psychological impact on different or similar people.

There are also conscious and unconscious phenomena - that makes sense - if something can be conscious or unconscious it is also going to be tied to its conscious or unconscious phenomena in the real world.

Unconscious Perception

What is an unconscious perception? If there can be unconscious perception and conscious perception then what is the difference between the two? Is that the same as asking what the difference is between consciousness and unconsciousness?

If something is unconscious then it isn't conscious - but what does that mean? If you understand something consciously then that means that you are aware of it - you understand it and are possibly aware of that understanding. However where is the line between being aware of the phenomena and a meta-awareness (aware that you are aware)?

There could be an endless number of degrees of awareness to different things - and different types of awareness - some of the awareness is going to be meta-awarenesses - awareness of other types of awareness - and some of the awareness is going to awareness of stuff that doesn't require further reflection or you already know you are aware of.

If someone already knows that they are aware of something then it doesn't require further reflection.

Consciousness is multifaceted

There are different ways of being conscious - the two most obvious are unconscious vs aware or conscious. Other ways are emotionally conscious, verbally conscious, semi-conscious or conscious in a speculative way, intuitively conscious, immediately conscious, more fully conscious, slightly conscious, visually conscious, some combination of visually conscious and emotionally or cognitively conscious, or some combination of all of those ways.

Different ideas or objects in life are mental constructs - so a simple object could represent a more complex mental representation. That idea significant because it can be applied to all mental cognitions or architectures. All mental or intellectual interactions in the mind have their own mental representations and are linked to other thoughts or representations. A representation of a park could be tied in with the representation of a picnic - or I could simply say that the events or meaning or definition of someone having a picnic is tied in directly or in a more complicated way with the persons conceptions of parks - it could be much complicated than simply tying in the ideas of 'picnic' and 'park' and arriving at the conclusion that 'you have picnics at parks'.

Some stuff in life is obvious and can be more conscious than stuff that isn't obvious. That relates to how conscious or unconscious ideas or experiences are. How is an experience emotionally or intellectually absorbed? How else can an experience be processed by the mind? Maybe it can be stored more visually or more unconsciously - so it might be stored unconsciously but

stored intellectually even though it might seem like the experience should be stored emotionally since the unconscious is emotional.

If an experience is processed emotionally what does that mean? Would that mean that it makes the person happier or is it possible to process pain in an emotional way - pain is more physical so I don't know if you could say that humans process pain emotionally. It is different to say that there is an emotional component to pain than to say that pain is processed emotionally. Obviously it is processed physically but that doesn't necessarily mean that it processed cognitively and felt more deeply. Clearly someone in physical pain is feeling a lot - but they probably aren't as emotional as when they are having fun or experiencing more pleasurable physical stimulation.

Subjective Reality

What is an emotional reality? The physical reality is obvious - that would simply be what happens in the world physically - how that affects a persons mind is much more complicated, however.

A single physical reality can influence the different components of consciousness - how someone is aware of the different components of reality. Those components become a part of the persons mind in various ways - with the other major factor being what the persons mind is thinking and feeling independently and how that changes based upon the different inputs from reality.

People need to be aware of what the reality is otherwise their minds could simply determine how they interpret reality unconsciously - instead of it being something more under your control or that you are at least aware of.

So the question then is - how does someones mind influence the reality in their mind - or how does their understanding of reality or how they are influenced - influence their own mind?

Defining Components of Mind

In order to sort out the task of 'discovering the mental and physical reality' first the different components of mind and reality need to be defined.

Components of Reality

- Unconsciousness or the elements of your unconscious that someone isn't aware of
- The feelings and thoughts that someone is aware of
- More complicated aspects of consciousness such as the ideas their reality is making them or leading ('influencing') them to think
- The conclusions people reach based off what they think the reality is - not just the 'background' ideas that are ideas that people have that influence them significantly that they aren't aware of - such as delusions or not-so-delusional delusions
- That means that there are different levels of ideas that people hold with different amounts of influence over their minds - some ideas are more delusional and they have different amounts of influence over their feelings and other cognitions
- The rest of physical and emotional processing and how that ties in with their higher cognitions - much of the physical stimulus might be obvious but it can be emotional or intellectual as well (like how the ideas that people hold and think about can be different degrees of emotional and cognitive)

Is Mental Reality Subjective?

First off - what could be a 'mental reality'? It could mean different things or be perceived in different ways. Is the mental reality in peoples minds the physical reality that they interpreted from the real world? Or is the mental reality subjective and something that their minds created?

There are different components of the intellectual. There is obvious intellectual - some things are more obvious or important intellectually while other ideas or understanding is more detailed or less important - or less detailed and sort of important, etc.

Some ideas or understandings are very important - but what are some of those understandings? It wouldn't be like the understanding of how to do

cooking or solve mathematics problems. Perhaps it could be an understanding of how to interact with other people or a persons understanding of their own emotions.

Some understandings are going to be more related to consciousness or the self. This would incorporate a hierarchy of needs relevant to what is most important to someones sense of self or core emotions. It is different from a hierarchy of needs for survival - it is a hierarchy of needs for personal satisfaction and the attainment of higher consciousness - which is a key goal that human development has focused on for millennia.

So there are different intellectual things that humans can focus on at different times. There are different intellectual skills that they can have and different understandings of those skills. Once a birdy, twice a wordy, once a birdy, twice is there, once a birdy, twice a wordy - once a birdy, twice is there. Twice is here, twice is there, twice twice twice, over there. That is an intellectual understanding of a rhyme. How could that understanding possibly be significant? It doesn't even make any sense - it just sounds rhythmical. How could a song influence someone intellectually? It wouldn't really matter that much I suppose. Songs can make people feel what the emotion is behind what the song is - that is obvious if you look at a song and analyze it and think about the feelings that it generates. Songs could generate a humorous mood or a sad or happy mood. But are all intellectual cognitions like songs? With songs it seems obvious - songs are emotional and carry emotion easily - but would a certain conversation or environment create emotion in the same obvious manner that a song would? A song conveys the emotion of the theme or message of the song (or the rhythm) - however other emotions are much more complicated - the question that brings up is that perhaps making more complicated emotions makes the emotions dulled down because there are so many emotions - it isn't a simple emotion like how a song has one simple emotion.

So, if there are many different emotions and complicated ways of feeling is mental reality then subjective and diverse - or concrete and obtuse?

How is Intellect Processed in the Mind?

I stated in previous articles that different feelings and thoughts are connected in the mind - and that the feeling or thought of one thought can influence the feeling or thought of another.

However, that means that certain ideas or thoughts can have a tangible presence and influence the feelings of other ideas and thoughts. They can also be grouped into categories - for instance a humans delusional or emotional thoughts could be exerting feelings while their logical or non-emotional and intellectual thoughts are producing conflicting feelings with the more intelligent thoughts at the same time. Such an interaction would be an example of cognition interaction with emotion - a humans cognitive or more intellectual thoughts could be exerting a certain type of feeling while their less intelligent or emotional thoughts could be producing a different type of feeling.

Cognition and emotion are always in balance - just like the left brain is theorized to be more logical and right brain is theorized to be more emotional and those two brains are always in balance - so tp emotion is always in balance with intellect or cognition.

WHy would a thought balance an emotion? If more intellectual thoughts are more conscious - and more emotional thoughts are less conscious - than that makes sense because thoughts are single points of information while emotions would probably take a longer time to experience than a thought - so say someone is experiencing an emotion - they could suddenly stop experiencing that emotion and think certain thoughts or even just initiate a period of more intellectual thinking which could stop the emotion, assist the emotion or hinder the emotion.

So certain types of thoughts are going to be more emotional and possibly assist emotion more than other thoughts that people can think. If the thoughts are delusional that might make the person more emotional than thoughts that make sense and are logical. There are also ideas and thoughts that can be grouped together - if someone thinks something through more clearly then maybe they can make the idea or thought structure more intellectual and less emotional. If it is more intellectual it could interfere more with emotional processes because thinking too much stops emotion or feeling.

It is obvious how thinking or thoughts could interfere with emotions = if someone is feeling good about something and they then think - 'I hate that thing' then it could stop the feeling good about the emotion completely. If someone continues the good emotion with thoughts that assist the positive emotion then the intellect or thoughts would be encouraging the emotion. However, if they think too much then they might become less emotional about it because they would be interfering with the emotional process.

So someones emotions could be feeling one thing (that would be like a thought or group of ideas - but they would be conveyed by the persons emotions) and their intellect (which is more conscious) could be thinking about or conveying something completely different. The emotional is unconscious - so unconsciously someones emotions could be making the person feel stupid and telling them that they are emotional and stupid while their intellect could be trying to override their emotions and make them think clearer.

The persons emotions could be telling them one idea unconsciously while they could be trying to communicate or enforce a different idea to their mind consciously.

Ideas can be cognitive or emotional

Ideas that people have can be conscious ideas or not conscious ideas - they can come from the conscious mind or they can be more unconscious. If they are conscious they it is probable that the person thought about them more consciously to themselves than an idea that came from their unconscious mind. How could a thought even stem from the unconscious anyway? Some ideas people simply absorb or learn from their environment and the person doesn't necessarily need to think about as consciously.

If the person doesn't think about the idea as consciously then it could still be understood consciously - they just might not be able to verbalize it as clearly. That makes sense - it depends on what the ideas and concepts are basically. Some ideas could be very conscious while others could be very unconscious - that brings up the point of how someone would define a 'conscious' idea versus an 'unconscious' idea or concept.

Other than the fact that the unconscious concept the person wouldn't be described as being as consciously aware of anyway - some concepts a person could be aware of in a different way yet could still be described as being conscious of. Some concepts don't need that much conscious thinking about either - if someone is hungry they don't really need to think that much about that in order to understand that they are hungry - their body is communicating the information about how hungry they are and they become aware of that because they are in touch with their physical senses - that is all that is required to be aware of that in that circumstance - a slight physical awareness.

Other things that people might be aware of could require large amounts of intellect, however. All animals know when they need to eat and when they are hungry - so that isn't a very complicated desire. What about social cues - those might be hard for a person to process consciously and could be unconscious for a long period of time before they become more absorbed consciously. All of a persons emotions could be unconscious to different degrees and further thought could influence how much they 'absorb' or understand those emotions.

How Does the Mind Process information?

A mental model could mean any kind of mental model. There are models of how emotion functions and models of how intellect functions - and models of how intellect functions and is processed in the mind with emotion.

SO what is the mental model for how the entire mind works then? First there is a sensory input -and then it is processed emotionally and cognitively by the mind. That seems rather obvious. Sensory inputs cause a reaction in the mind. That is what happens - there is some sort of stimulus - and then that stimulus causes a human to think about what that stimulus does for the person.

Different stimuli trigger mental reactions that can be cognitive or emotional. That happens all of the time when someone sees something that triggers a reaction. Vision helps humans to notice various kinds of stimuli. That means that the stimuli must be processed first by one of the human senses. That is only for external stimuli or stimulation, however. A stimulus or trigger could come from within the mind from memory or what the person is thinking about.

Emotional and Cognitive are intertwined

If there is an emotion stimulus (like seeing a dog) then that could trigger a cognitive or emotional reaction in a persons mind.

So what kind of reaction does it trigger? A cognitive reaction or an emotional reaction? A cognitive reaction would be considered or viewed as the person thinking more - while an emotional reaction would be the person feeling more. Since dogs are emotional it would probably trigger an emotional reaction and not a cognitive one - however, what if an emotional stimulus starts something cognitive? It might start off as emotional since the person is seeing a dog and dogs are cute and they are animals (and animals think less and are more feeling-based than humans) but that doesn't necessarily mean that it converts into being more emotional.

What kinds of thoughts would seeing something emotional (like a dog) trigger? What kinds of emotions would it trigger? If thought about that way then it seems simple - seeing something emotional would 'probably' trigger a more emotional reaction in the mind but could also just simply cause the person to think more depending on the mood that they are in. It would seemingly produce an association of similar ideas or feelings that the dog is associated with. However, the person might see dogs all of the time and in that case it wouldn't generate much more or different stimulation for the person.

Emotional and Cognitive Stimulation

So mental stimulation can be either emotional or cognitive. If the stimulation is emotional then it produces feelings; however cognitions can also produce feelings - an example of that would be someone laughing after hearing a good joke.

So what is the relationship between knowledge structures and emotional and cognitive stimulation? There must be some sort of emotional-cognitive relationship between each mental process or mental node that produces a combination of feelings or thoughts (i could call the thoughts 'intellectualizations')

Consciousness can also cause feelings or intellectual stimulation. What is that saying - that 'consciousness' can cause stimulation? That is basically just saying that someone is in a state of feeling in which they are largely aware of what they are feeling. So the question then is can someone direct what their feelings or thoughts are aware of? People have important feelings and less important thoughts and feelings. Can someone's consciousness feel certain feelings better than other feelings? That person might be more largely aware of some types of stimulation more so than other types of stimulation then.

Different types of information could also be processed by the mind - not just different types of feelings. Feelings are also just communicative so they could fall under the title of 'information' in the mind. So feelings and thoughts are processed as information by the mind.

Mental Representations

Different ideas, concepts and thoughts can interact in the mind. One idea can be a 'meta-idea' - an idea of another idea, or an idea could simply be associated with another idea. If different ideas produce different feelings and different amounts of feeling then an idea that is a meta-idea of another idea could produce a similar or associated feeling.

The ideas don't even have to be of each other - one idea could be a further reflection of another idea without the person being aware that that is occurring. Meta-representation (meta-ideas) do not have to be conscious - humans naturally reflect on stuff and feelings and thoughts or 'intellectualizations' naturally reflect and build on each other.

David Rosenthal proposed that a representation is only conscious if it is presented by a higher-order thought. However, I don't believe that to be completely accurate - representations could be simply thought about more without the person consciously thinking about it to themselves. Thoughts that aren't conscious naturally reflect on other thoughts or ideas or experiences and these concepts or 'understandings' build in the mind naturally by themselves. Furthermore, Any time someone becomes more conscious of something it could be the result of a feeling enhancing another feeling - not necessarily a thought enhancing another thought.

For instance - if someone 'has a feeling' for something and they then think more about it they don't need to necessarily be consciously directing that feeling (the further 'meta' feeling) because humans minds naturally reflect on things all of the time and they don't need to consciously say to themselves 'I need to think more about that'. It could simply be a feeling in their mind that triggered another feeling or there are possibly 'reflective feelings' whose purpose is to reflect and build and make more conscious other feelings. These feelings could be understandings of experiences or understandings of anything in life (though i would think that most understandings would be of experiences).

Florid vs Pastel Representations

Daniel Dennett suggested that there are representations that involve a sense of action or agency which he called 'florid' representations while 'pastel' representations are more basic intentions that do not necessarily involve as much intention.

However, how does a representation have an intention? A representation could be an idea - and in that case, the representation could have intentions attached. If the representation is a feeling it could also have intentions attached. An intention is a strong feeling - so it could be obvious that some representations have strong feelings or other thoughts attached.

Why do they need to even be labelled 'representations' then - I could just say that some ideas have stronger motivations and feelings attached than other ideas, and that some ideas form ideas or 'understandings' of other ideas that could be objects in the world or other concepts in the persons mind. However, when some object or idea is 'represented' as or in another idea or object in the mind it is called a meta-representation, or just a 'representation of another representation'.

So the term representation does have some use - because people represent things in the world that are happening all of the time. There is a difference then between the definition of an 'understanding' and a 'representation'. Humans could have understandings of anything basically, some of the stuff in the world is going to be represented in their mind as a single object, and other stuff is just going to be 'understood' as an 'understanding' to the person. 'Understandings' could involve multiple representations and 'understandings of understandings' could involve multiple meta-representations.

The important question then is - which components of our representations or understandings have strong feelings attached? That is what Dennett suggested by his distinction between 'florid' and 'pastel' representations. The word 'florid' by definition means elaborately or excessively intricate or complicated or excessive - so that makes it obvious that some feelings have components that are more motivated or salient.

The Use of Representations

Dennett also pointed out that there is knowing and a use to representations - if someone simply has a representation that is different from it being a practical representation. This is different from 'symbols' in my view because some symbols have a greater significance on the human psyche. That makes it seem simple - obviously different objects in the environment are going to have a greater psychological impact than other objects, and different objects are going to be represented differently.

Take is a step further and it becomes obvious that different mental constructs interact with each other within the mind. Mental constructs have been defined a long time ago - Carl Jung talked about mental constructs when discussing dreams and other significant psychological phenomena. I would think that much could be understood if it could be sorted out the different mental constructs - these are different from simply grouping ideas and subjects and experiences and 'understandings' in life into different categories - but the significance of each would need to also be understood.

The question then is - which subjects or categories or experiences could form a significant mental construct? Do different emotions form mental constructs? Can different thoughts or constructs be formed from significant life experiences and the emotions that these experiences generate? Then is it simply an emotional world that needs to be analyzed? If complex mental constructs can be formed it is certainly more complex than a few simple categories in life evoking certain emotions.

This is obviously going to be more complicated than simple symbols, a physical symbol is going to be more simple than a mental symbol - if you could call a mental symbol a representation anyway. Jung called significant mental constructs or symbols 'archetypes'. However - those are just single symbols or constructs - what would happen if a mental construct combined with another mental construct? A representation is just a single object - but a representation can be of a mental construct which could consist of multiple representations, and different mental constructs can combine and influence each other in the mind - and obviously are going to be emotionally significant.

Object Representations

One form of a mental representation is simply objects from the world forming a mental representation - either multiple objects in someones vision or a single object in someones vision - this is called the 'object-based attention' model - Montemayor and Haladjian (2015)[\[footnote\]](#): Consciousness, Attention and Conscious Attention. (2015) Montemayor and Maladjian. The MIT Press.

Such diverse theories and studies give us good reason to believe that different attention systems work together in complementary ways to process perceptual information, and that object-based attention is an evolutionarily newer processing strategy that developed after the more basic feature-based and spatial forms of attention. The usefulness of the object-based model of high-level representation is that it provides a structure wherein low-level information from the various visual pathways can be integrate to form a coherent and persisting representation of a visual object (Ballard et al. 1997, Kahneman, Teisman, and Gibbs 1992, Noles, Scholl, and Mitroff 2005). Some studies, however, suggest that this binding can happen even when pairs of features are simply superimposed spatially (Holcombe and Cavanagh 2001) and thus not necessarily bound in an object file format. Nevertheless, such forms of 'conjunction attention' enable the crucial integration of multiple features. This ability is particularly important for guiding actions and for conscious attention, which we discuss further in chapter 4. Our position is that before you can have a conscious representation, visual information must be organized in some useful way. Object file representations provide this organization, especially since visual features usually belong to discrete objects. Without the ability to select an individual object and bind its feature, an agent could not sustain a persisting representation of the object.(We are particularly drawn to the object-based attention model because it provides a nice structure for the integration of information from the various visual subsystems to form a coherent representation of a visual scene, in a way that allows mental representations to refer to external objects. Whether or not mental representations truly are organized via object files remains debatable, but for our purposes the form in which features are integrated is not problematic as long as there is some account for this integration. we believe that object files are

theoretically important for providing the content of mental representations and for integrating perceptual information from multiple modalities, as well as from other forms of attention, in order to produce a coherent representation. It is these representations that most likely make up the contents of conscious experience

I already mentioned in a previous article that vision was like the base-line cognition. They stated that vision is necessary for mental representations, which I pointed out before them that vision was the baseline cognition which is basically saying the same thing. People that can see use their vision to think, and when they aren't looking with their eyes open they are visualizing things which they are thinking about. That is going to influence their cognitions greatly because vision is always needed and is a part of the thought process.

I also pointed out in my previous article that vision is tied to more simple cognitions - which seems fairly obvious on the surface but could be extremely complicated if someone wanted to analyze it because it would basically be analyzing all of a human's thinking and where that thinking comes from. Does it come from vision, emotion or feeling or other thoughts or memories?

Measuring Emotion and Subjectivity

So far in this article I discussed mental representations and how they influence the mind cognitively and emotionally. The question that comes up when trying to measure how reality is expressed and represented in the mind is how could such subjective mental functions be measured?

Some things in life are obvious and their influence on the human mind is obvious also - however it isn't really that simple. Things in life have an unconscious and a conscious influence on people. If the influence is unconscious then it could be completely unknown what the influence is. Alvin Goldman phrased meta-representations on a simple lower level 'first order representation level' and a higher level a 'meta-representational' level. There are simple beliefs and desires on the first level and the second level is more reflective - it is a meta-representational level by which people think

about their attitudes and their basic representations of the world - their basic beliefs and desires.

He talks about 'mental attitudes' and these attitudes are different from concepts. If someone has an attitude then it is different from a concept that they can form. Attitudes come from beliefs and desires and intentions and other mental attitudes - however - how do these attitudes become concepts?

[\[footnote\]](#)

The Mentalizing Folk. Alvin Goldman. (2000) In Dan SPerber (Ed.)
Metarepresenations. Oxford University Press

What concepts do the folk have of mental representations? How do they conceptualize or represent to themselves such states as belief, desire, intention, and the other mental attitudes? What properties do they endow these states with, in their fundamental grasp of them? These questions should be contrasted with questions about the essential nature of mental states. ...do not conceptualize beliefs and desire as neural states. How do they conceptualize them?

So they conceptualize by looking at their first level representational state - their basic beliefs and desires - then they form higher or more complex representations of those basic needs. This might be related to a hierarchy of needs because it has to do with different levels of thinking. Thinking is basically the same as different levels of representation, because, just as the world is represented simply and more complex, so too can thinking be simple and complex - and it can be about the world or about the self and world intertwined.